

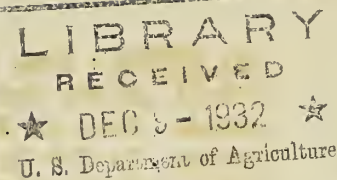
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Thanksgiving Turkey News



An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Roy C. Potts, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, November 22, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody?

With Thanksgiving only two days off I know you are wanting the latest news about turkeys today. And we're ready to give it to you. Mr. Roy C. Potts, poultry marketing specialist from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, is here with me. And he certainly looks as though he had cheerful news about the turkey market.

Am I right, Mr. Potts? Are there plenty of fat tender turkeys ready for the Thanksgiving trade this year?

MR. POTTS: Yes, Miss Van Deman. I believe there's a supply of turkeys large enough to meet all Thanksgiving demands.

And as for the quality, the turkeys coming on the market are equal to, if not better than those of last season. Each year turkey growers take greater care in selecting the turkeys for the Thanksgiving market. They pick from their flocks only the more mature, well-fleshed, fatter birds to sell at Thanksgiving. This allows the lighter smaller birds time to put on more weight before Christmas, and it assures the consumer of high quality turkeys for both holidays.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Does this mean, Mr. Potts, that there will be plenty of turkeys weighing, say, from 8 to 10 pounds? Small families, you know, want small turkeys nowadays. And ovens as well as families are smaller than they used to be.

MR. POTTS: Yes, there will be plenty of the smaller hen turkeys on sale this week. So far wholesale prices for these high-quality young hen turkeys run one or two cents higher than for young toms. For the family that wants a small turkey, I'd recommend one of the plump young hens, weighing from 8 to 10 pounds. They have a good full breast, and a high proportion of meat to bone. But if you want a 14 or 15 pound turkey, then choose one of the young toms. The toms have larger frames and when they fill out well, they naturally weigh several pounds more than the hens of the same age.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Potts, now that you can assure us of supply and quality, what about turkey prices? I know that's a hard question to answer for the country as a whole, but perhaps you can tell us what the retailers are selling their turkeys for in some of the big cities.

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MR. POTTS: Yes, I have news from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Retail prices for very fine quality western turkeys run from 27 to 32 cents a pound. Here in Washington some stores are retailing good quality turkeys for 25 cents. In New England and some of the eastern markets fancy turkeys from nearby farms command higher prices. Turkeys of No. 2 quality are retailing as low as 20 cents a pound.

Now, Miss Van Deman, I'm going to turn the tables and ask you a question or two.

MISS VAN DEMAN: All right, Mr. Potts, I guess that's only fair.

MR. POTTS: Miss Van Deman, isn't it the cooking that makes a turkey golden brown and tender and juicy and delicious when its served?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, Mr. Potts, I admit it is.

MR. POTTS: Well, occasionally I hear debates about the best way to roast a turkey. Some good cooks I know say they always use a covered roaster; others say they never put a lid over a turkey in the oven. Now, what do you home economics specialists say?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, Mr. Potts, it all depends on whether you have one of those plump young turkeys less than a year old, or whether you have a larger, older bird. A young turkey, we think, cooks better in an open pan, provided the heat of the oven is well controlled. A large, heavy, older bird generally needs a covered roaster. But if you want a nice brown crispy finish on a roast turkey, don't let the cook put water into that covered pan. The steam that comes from the turkey itself is enough to help cook it tender. Too much moisture will pot-roast it and draw out the juice and the flavor.

MR. POTTS: Miss Van Deman, you spoke of well-controlled heat in the oven. Well, what do you mean by that?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, any kind of a turkey, young or old, needs a hot oven at the start, around 400° to 450° F., to brown it lightly. Then it is best to reduce the oven heat rapidly to moderate, or about 350° F., and let the turkey finish roasting slowly. That's the way to develop flavor and hold in the juices. A young turkey weighing 8 to 10 pounds will roast tender this way in 2-1/2 to 3 hours. The large, older bird in about 4 hours. Of course a turkey needs turning occasionally and basting with the brown drippings from the bottom of the pan, and a little melted butter, or some of the turkey fat tried out.

MR. POTTS: So far, Miss Van Deman, you haven't said a word about the stuffing for the turkey. What kind do you think is best?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, if I answer that question, Mr. Potts, I'll be giving you my personal opinion. I happen to be one of those who like a dry crumbly stuffing, made with bread crumbs and butter or turkey fat, celery, and other savory seasonings, and chestnuts if I can get them. Lots of people, I know, prefer a stuffing which has milk or water added to make it moist. And again, some want oysters in their turkey stuffing. After all that's a matter of taste. But roasting the turkey, that calls for all we know of the real science of meat cookery.

And thank you, Mr. Potts, for the market news about turkeys. We may be after you again for news of turkeys.

Goodybye for this time.